

rity forces after the withdrawal of waging war case against Jodhpur undertrials.

Exploitation of Tobacco growers by traders in Andhra Pradesh

1031. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tobacco traders agreed to pay the guaranteed price to the tobacco growers who are raising the crop on black cotton soil;

(b) whether it is a fact that the tobacco traders failed to honour the commitment in regard to purchase of tobacco at the time of auctions held at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh on 3rd April, 1989;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the officials of the Tobacco Board were marking 70 per cent to 80 per cent of high grade tobacco as mixed grades; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to prevent farmers from being exploited by traders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) The tobacco traders agreed to pay guaranteed price to the tobacco growers before raising the crop in black cotton soils. The price guaranteed to the growers was Rs. 16.50 per kg. for F1 grade and Rs. 15.50 per kg. for F2 grade. The overall average price agreed for black soil tobacco was Rs. 14.00 per kg.

(b) In a meeting held in New Delhi on 30-3-89 the traders agreed to pay Rs. 20.50 per kg. F1 grade and Rs. 19.50 per kg. for F2 grade. The auctions started with this understanding from 3rd April, 1989. Due to delay in passing of the instructions by the traders to their representatives at the auction, platforms the commitment could not be honoured on the first day. However, from 4th April, 1989 onwards the traders started implementing the commitment in respect of only the best graded brighter varieties tobacco. Slightly inferior quality tobacco fetched lower prices.

(c) No, Sir. Only 31.89 per cent of high grades were sold as mixed grades as on 14-4-89.

(d) In order to arrest the declining trend in the prices the STC has been requested to step into the market and buy grades of tobacco as part of their commercial operations.

Illicit cultivation of Ganja in Tamil Nadu

1033. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that illicit cultivation of Ganja has been noticed on a large scale in the hill ranges of Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is also a fact that ganja plants are being cultivated on fertile Government land in inaccessible areas;

(c) whether there is any official connivance in the cultivation of ganja in the reserve forest land; and

(d) what steps Government have taken to check illicit cultivation of ganja in the forest areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (d) Illicit cultivation of ganja has come to the notice in the inaccessible hilly areas of Idukki district of Kerala and Uchalathu Mettu in Madurai district of Tamilnadu (bordering Idukki district). During 1988, ganja plants in 1,187 acres were destroyed in various operations conducted for the purpose. In the recent operation code-named, 'Operation Green House' from 17th to 19th March, 1989, conducted at Kambakkal valley in Kerala, ganja plants in 652 acres were destroyed.

While intelligence gathered indicate illicit cultivation of ganja in Poramboke forest,

area and in reserve forest land, no report of official connivance in such illicit cultivation has been received.

The State Governments have been requested to conduct survey of suspected areas of illicit ganja cultivation and take effective steps for destruction of such illicit cultivation.

Illicit cultivation of ganja is an offence under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, attracting rigorous imprisonment for a term, which may extend to 5 years and besides, liability to fine which may extend to Rs. 50,000/-

The courts have been empowered to impose fines exceeding the above limit. The Act also enjoins upon every officer of the Government (including village officers) to give information of such illicit cultivation when it comes to their knowledge and failure to do so attracts punishment.

The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988, inter alia, provides for detention of any person indulging in such illicit cultivation.

Wage Bill of Central Government employees

1034. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA;

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of Central Government employees and the total wage bill in 1987 and 1988;

(b) what is the percentage of wage bill to the total Government expenditure in 1987 and 1988; and

(c) whether there is any plan to freeze the new appointments and total wage bill?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B. K. GAHVI): (a) The total number

of Central Government regular civilian employees as on 31st March, 1987 and 1988 was 33.21 lakhs and 38 lakhs (estimated) respectively and the total wage bill was Rs. 2,426 crores in 1979-80 and Rs. 7514 crores (provisional) in 1987-88.

(b) The percentage of wage bill to total Government expenditure was 13.14 in 1979-80 and 11.55 in 1987-88.

(c) No, Sir.

Private placement of bonds by NTPC

1035. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA:

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any permission has been given to the National Thermal Power Corporation to go in for private placement of bonds; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof including the amount and other terms agreed to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd., has been allowed on 27th March 1989 to float Rs. 500 crores as 9 per cent tax-free bonds in the denomination of Rs. 1,000/- each on private placement basis with Nationalised banks and their subsidiaries with a condition that atleast 20 per cent of the above issue shall be offered for sale at par over the counter to general public within three months from the date of allotment of the bonds. The bonds are redeemable at par after ten years from the date of allotment.